

Spring 2024

HealthyTogether

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Taming Spring Allergies

If you start sneezing or coughing at the first signs of spring, you may have seasonal allergies.

Depending on where you live, spring allergies can begin as early as January and peak at many times during the year.

Here are 9 things you can do to ease your troubles and make it through the season:

1 Spot the signs. Symptoms can include coughing, sneezing, a runny nose, itchy or watery eyes, or a sore throat.

2 Know the causes. Most spring allergies are caused by tree pollen. If your problems continue through late spring into the summer or fall, you may also be allergic to grass or weed pollen.

3 Check pollen counts. Find them in your local weather reports or at <http://pollen.aaaai.org>.

4 Beware of dry, hot, windy days. This type of weather can increase pollen counts.


5 Keep pollen out of your home. Close windows and doors. Turn on the air conditioner, as needed. Change your clothes and shower when done spending time outside.

6 See a health care provider. If your allergies are severe, your provider can help you find out what is causing them and choose the best treatment for you.

7 Take medicine. Certain types of over-the-counter medicines may offer relief. These include antihistamines, decongestants, nasal sprays and eye drops. Or your provider may prescribe medicine.

8 Start treatment early. If you know you have spring allergies, talk with your provider about when to start treatment. They may suggest you take medicine before pollen season and your symptoms begin.

9 Consider immunotherapy. This can be in the form of shots or tablets. It exposes you to small amounts of an allergen over time to slowly reduce your symptoms.



**We are here to help
any day, any time.
24/7 NURSE ADVICE LINE
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want to talk to a nurse.**

Stigma: Is It Keeping You From Seeking Support?

Mental health problems are more common than you might think.

In any given year, more than 1 in 5 U.S. adults is living with a mental disorder. Yet, more than half of all people with mental illness do not get help. This is largely because the stigma of mental illness keeps some people from seeking treatment.

Speak Up

Shame, embarrassment and fear of public judgment are some of the most common reasons people avoid treatment. It can be hard to put aside worries about what others may think and ask for help. But keep in mind that you are not alone.

If you suspect that you or a loved one has a mental health issue, you should not wait to seek support. People are better able to recover when they get treatment early.

Get Relief

More than 2/3 of people with serious mental illness find major (significant) relief from their symptoms with treatment. Some options include:

- Medicine
- Talk therapy
- Support groups

If you need help finding treatment, talk with your health care provider. You can also visit www.samhsa.gov/find-help.

**In Crisis?
Call or Text 988**

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers free, confidential support 24/7 for anyone in distress.



health briefs

Gratitude Is a Skill

Many skills benefit from practice — even gratitude. Try to find small wins and give mindful “thank-yous.”

In time, it will take less effort to see the good. It may also lower your stress and boost your mood. To start, keep a personal journal. Let others know you appreciate them.



Summer Prep

Time to enroll in swim lessons! Research shows that formal lessons help lower the risk of drowning, a leading cause of death for youngsters. No matter what kids’ skill levels are, adults should watch closely when they are in or near water. That includes the bathtub, pool, lake or ocean. Find free resources at www.redcross.org/take-a-class/swimming.



Snack Time

Often, people who eat late at night are bored or do so out of habit, not because they are hungry. This may make them more likely to put on weight. If you have cravings late at night, try eating more throughout the day. And keep healthy options, like fruit, seeds and unsalted nuts, on hand in case the urge to snack still strikes.



6 Workout Wins That Have Nothing to Do With Weight

Walking faster, feeling stronger, sleeping better. There are so many ways to see your workouts are working. And a lot of them have nothing to do with the scale. In fact, targeting a specific body size can backfire, causing you to fixate on food or overexercise. So, instead of focusing on weight, use 1 or more of these measures to track your fitness success:

1 You just plain feel good! Even a single workout can relieve stress and anxiety. And the mood boosts add up when you stick with a regular program. You may also find your energy level ticks upward, too.

2 Everyday activities are easier. You might notice this when you carry groceries, lift a child or feel less stiff getting out of bed.

3 Exercise is less taxing. During each workout, rate how hard you are working on a scale of 1 to 10. One is a very light effort. Ten is your max. Over time, you should feel less out of breath during the same activities.

4 You improve on fitness tests. Choose benchmarks based on your fitness goals. Test them each month. For instance:

- Pick a course and time yourself walking it. This can be to the corner, a lap around a track or ¼ mile on a treadmill.
- Do as many arm curls as you can in 2 minutes, safely.

5 Your blood pressure drops. When you go to a medical appointment or check at home, you will likely notice lower readings after about 6 months of regular exercise. That is true even if you have high blood pressure (hypertension) that has not responded well to treatment with medicine.

6 Your heart rate improves. Aerobic exercise strengthens your heart so that it pumps more blood with each beat. That means your heart rate will be lower during workouts and at rest. Check it with a smartwatch or by pausing mid-workout to take your pulse.





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Call **1-800-562-4620** to discuss any of the topics in this newsletter or
any other health issues. Visit our Website at **www.OHPCC.org**.

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How to Eat Well for Good Kidney Health

Your kidneys play a big role in filtering out waste from your body. When you have chronic kidney disease (CKD), they might not do this job as well. Here are 3 ways to eat for healthier kidneys:

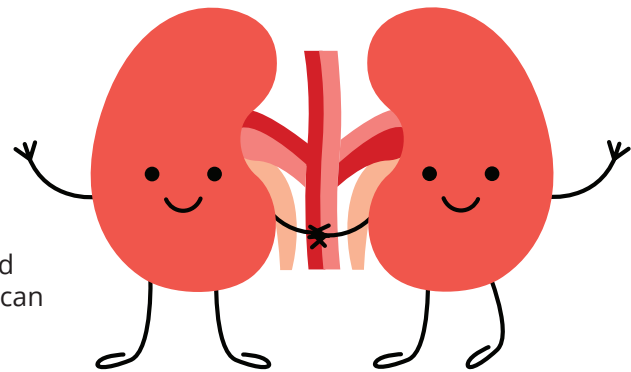
Watch Your Protein

Eating more than your body needs can cause extra waste to build up in your blood. This makes your kidneys work harder. It is best to eat foods high in protein in small portions. This includes meats, dairy, eggs, fish, poultry, beans, grains and nuts. Your health care provider can tell you how much protein to eat.

Skip Added Salt (Sodium)

Too much can raise your blood pressure and cause fluid to build up in your body. This can put a strain on your heart. To reduce your salt intake:

- Prepare most of your meals at home with fresh ingredients. Restaurant and processed foods, like frozen dinners, often contain a lot of salt.
- Read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods. Choose low-salt or unsalted versions. Those with a daily value of 20% of sodium or more are considered high in sodium.
- Rinse canned foods, such as beans or fish, with water before you use them.



Mind Your Minerals

You may need to limit the amount of potassium and phosphorus you get from food. These minerals can build up in your blood and cause heart problems, joint pain and more. They are found in many fruits, vegetables, meats, cereals and dairy products.

Remember, your health care team and a registered dietitian can support you and design a meal plan that is right for you.